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ABSTRACT

Richland College's (Dallas, Texas) Human Resources Development Center (HRDC) offers many valuable non-instructional services to all members of the community, without requiring college enrollment. Services which have been requested have fallen into five basic categories: individual personal counseling, group counseling, family counseling, professional development for educators, and seminars and workshops designed for small business management personnel. The professional staff for HRDC has been carefully selected to assure expertise in each type of counseling. Staff counselors and psychologists, all of whom hold either doctoral or masters degrees, have previous work experience in mental health research centers, state hospitals, colleges and private practice. Consultants in the fields of psychiatry, finance, and management have been obtained by the center for dealing with specialized problems. The center is operated on a break-even basis. The fees paid by clients (\$13 per hour) are used to reimburse the professional staff. Administrative costs are defrayed through grants and college district funds. Since the beginning of fall semester, 1974, 918 clients have been counseled in approximately 10,000 counseling hours, in addition to the hours devoted to seminars and workshops. (NHH)

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Community Outreach -- A Definition

Eleanor Ott

Modern community colleges are agents for change in the communities they serve. By identifying the educational needs of the community and implementing programs to meet those needs, the community college is able to enrich and enlarge the lives of its students.

To meet the individual needs of the students, community colleges provide extensive counseling services and a variety of other non-instructional opportunities to direct students through successful educational experiences. In retrospect, many enrollees identify these opportunities as the "change makers" in their lives.

Richland College, Dallas, Texas, has implemented a program which offers many valuable non-instructional services to all members of the community, without requiring college enrollment. The project, in its second year of operation, is the Human Resources Development Center (HRDC).

The Center was established to test three basic hypotheses:

(1) that "community" is properly defined to include all members of an area who, through taxation, support an educational institution, (2) that community members have identifiable needs not always satisfied in either credit or non-credit instructional offerings, and (3) that an urban area contains within its population sufficient professional expertise to deal with the area's problems. These hypotheses have been proven.

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The citizens of Dallas County have sought a variety of services. Providing these services has brought many elements of the community to the Richland campus. The age range has been from 18 months to 56 years with problems as varied in nature as the ages of the clients. The requested services have fallen into five basic categories: individual personal counseling, group counseling, family counseling, professional development for educators and seminars and workshops designed for small business management personnel.

Personal counseling is available for most cases and within all age groups. An autistic 18-month-old child was brought to the Human Resources Development Center because his parents did not know where else to go. Counselors at the center have been working to educate the family in the proper handling of the child until an appropriate agency can be found.

Another young boy came to the HRDC after unsuccessful counseling sessions at six other agencies. They could not correct his extreme "acting out" behavior. During his initial visit to Richland, the client created a disturbance in the campus center that led to minor property destruction. Since then, the young man has been seen carrying his counselor's briefcase as they leave the campus together.

Several people contemplating suicide have come to the center for personal counseling --- sessions that have helped the clients overcome the severe depressive states which led them to the brink of self-destruction.

Other services provided by the center have been identified by public

school personnel in the community. Local school psychologists are often frustrated by two problems: (1) the inability to locate an available agency to help the student at a price the parents can afford and (2) the unwillingness of parents to participate in family counseling sessions in the child's school. The staff of the HRDC devotes fifty percent of its efforts to these family problems which are first identified by public school personnel. The success rate is staggering. In 95% of the cases, both parents are involved in the counseling sessions. The center is quickly becoming a third member of a community team composed of the teacher and the school psychologist. Working together, the group can identify, diagnose and help resolve student and family disturbances.

Interesting outgrowths of this effort are group counseling sessions designed for parents of children with learning disabilities, for parents of children with behavior disorders and for adolescents referred to the center by area probation offices.

To teach special techniques necessary for working with pre-school clients, the center offers training programs for day care personnel. No attempt is made to train these individuals as play therapists, although basic play therapy techniques are taught to many people, including parents, who are involved in all types of child-care.

To provide professional development for area educators, the center, upon request, designs and implements seminars and workshops. A workshop

designed for junior high school teachers and counselors provided an introduction to behavior modification techniques applicable to the school situation. Another group of counselors received assistance through a regular review of their cases with an HRDC psychologist. The sessions included training in diagnostic techniques. Parent-teacher groups have requested and received seminars focusing on family communication skills.

Many people in the community are in need of vocational counseling, also available at the HRDC. An ex-professor at a midwestern university has been working successfully as a meteorologist for several years. Now, at age 56, he is uncertain about his career choice. With assistance from the center staff, he has undertaken a realistic examination of available alternatives. His decision is to return to school to complete courses in environmental technology. An engineer, released from his position because of a company cutback, studied his alternatives and is now repairing the machines he helped design.

The professional staff for the Human Resource Development Center has been carefully selected to assure expertise in each type of counseling. Staff counselors and psychologists, all of whom hold either Ph.D or masters degrees in their respective fields, have previous work experience in mental health research centers, state hospitals, colleges and private practices. Consulting work has been done in area independent school districts, as well as for the Dallas Day Care Association, the Mental Health and Mental

Retardation Society and the War on Poverty agency.

Consultants in the fields of psychiatry, finances and management have been obtained by the center for dealing with specialized problems in these areas. The center's psychiatric consultant maintains a private practice while serving on the staffs of five Dallas hospitals. The financial consultant works with individuals and owners of small businesses to help with financial planning, and the management consultant shares his expertise in management training with small business groups.

The center is operated on a break-even basis. The fees paid by clients are used to reimburse the professional staff. The rate is \$13 an hour, the same remuneration given part-time faculty in the Dallas County Community College District. Administrative costs for the center are defrayed through grants from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, Austin, Texas, with matching funds provided by the college district.

Since the beginning of fall semester, 1974, 918 clients have been counseled. An approximate 10,000 counseling hours were expended, in addition to the hours devoted to seminars and workshops. People are responding to the opportunity to get professional help from a sophisticated staff working in a supervised mental health agency model. Community members realize they can receive professional assistance at a reasonable rate in a non-threatening location. These people are taking advantage of benefits designed for them by their community college system.

It is these people, with their growing demands on the center, who are making this branch of Richland College a community contact point of utmost importance in providing solutions or, at the very least, in providing the direction toward solutions for people in Dallas County.

Further information about the Human Resources Development Center can be obtained by contacting the center's director, Phil Storey, Richland College, 12800 Abrams Rd., Dallas, Texas.

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